

THE LITTLE GRAY GHOST

A MATTER-OF-FACT MAN'S STORY

BY CORNELIA A. P. COMER

I'M Dennyson — Dr. Dennyson — and this is my only ghost-story. As a scientific man, I suppose I have no right even to a very little ghost, but this one came to me in the way of business.

Personally, I did n't want a ghost. I don't go in for anything of the kind, not even to the extent of reading the occult articles in the magazines. I see the thing this way. We're here to hold down the job — the long, long job of living — and it's enough to keep us busy. 'Functioning on this plane' is sufficiently stiff work for me. I've no time to waste thinking about other planes, and I don't believe anybody else has.

Besides, there is one thing I know — for I've seen it. The people who are really next to this 'functioning on the next plane' business are n't the ones who make a fuss about it. Spiritualism repels them. They don't go to séances. They don't conduct investigations. They don't even join the Psychological

Researchers, but, by the Lord Harry, *they know*. And they don't care very much, either. They take it for granted. They've always known. But they don't want people to think them queer; they don't want to get into the newspapers. Usually it's only when they think you're another that they will discuss it at all. They are n't what you'd pick out for the spooky kind. Plump and sensible and easy-going, mostly. You'd never in the world spot one by the way he looked or talked.

There was Carruthers. He talked to me more freely than any of the others. A little Canadian traveling-man from Vancouver. Scotch blood. Sandy, stocky, sane. A good jollier, and sold big bills of goods. It would n't have added to his popularity at the head-office, though, if they'd known he had the Eyes that See. So, naturally, he did n't tell them. He would n't have told me, only, that night I came across him at Calgary, he was threatened with pneumonia and pretty ill. And

he was worried just then by the Little Gray One, and did n't know what to do about her. So he asked my professional advice, put himself in my hands, if you please, and I got interested and told him what I'd do in his place.

No, it was n't delirium, and Carruthers was n't any ordinary crank. Understand, I don't pronounce at all upon the value of his experiences as a basis for theorizing about the Beyond. I don't say they were n't hallucinations. I don't say they were. I suspend my judgment. So, by the way, did he. He did n't philosophize about them, himself. That attracted me.

We were snow-bound together at that hotel for three days. The first night he came in from a train that had been caught in the drifts for eighteen hours, and he slept in damp sheets on top of that. I wonder he escaped severe illness, but he knew enough to ask for a doctor, and my room happened to be next door to his, so I watched him pretty closely that night and it turned out all right. He escaped pneumonia — and I met my ghost.

Odd thought, is n't it, that perhaps — just perhaps, you know — the outer darkness a bit beyond our radiant, comfortable world of sense-perception, is full of pitiful, groping, bodiless folks? We take it from the scientists that there are colors we can't see and sounds we can't hear, but we're shy of believing there are people we can't touch. I like flesh and blood best, myself, but when I think about those possible Others, I feel sorry, the way one does about sick children or hurt animals. There is something in me that understands what being a maimed or naked soul might feel like.

Well, Carruthers and I talked for hours, and I think the man emptied his soul before me. What it all simmers down to, is this: those who have the Eyes claim that they begin to see

queer things in childhood and get used to it. They learn early not to talk about it, too, for of course people call them little liars. It does n't seem, essentially, to be a very thrilling experience or a very interesting one. Carruthers knew no more about the ways of God to man than you or I. And he did n't pretend to, either. He said seeing spirits was n't a bit more interesting than seeing anything else, when you were used to it. The faculty shed no particular light on his own path and, apparently, was n't designed to give him personally any form of help: Rather, it was the other way about. the benefactions were on his side.

I asked Carruthers a lot of questions. Did n't it worry him terribly, I wanted to know, this moving in the middle of a cloud of unseen witnesses? He said not at all, not any more than the hundreds of faces we pass on a crowded city street worry the rest of us; really, it was an effect almost identical with that. Occasionally one face would show with increased distinctness against the crowded background and he would see it oftener. If it finally became as definite to him as flesh and blood, he would accost it. I did n't get a very clear idea of their methods of communication. Carruthers used human speech to them, but usually 'heard in his consciousness' what they had to say. You may make what you please of that.

Considered as spirits, I should regard Carruthers's friends as an amœba-like bunch. There seemed to be hordes of them unable to move on. 'Earth-bound' is the spiritualistic slang for the condition, I believe, but Carruthers did n't use any cant terms — that was another thing I liked about him. He simply said most of them are just dazed, dumb, helpless — amorphous Things that have slipped out of this world and have n't yet grasped the

conditions of living elsewhere. They are like jellyfish rocking in a tide-deserted pool. They have to be helped to deeper water. His idea of his own relation to them, so far as he could be said to have an idea, was that he was a missionary of a sort, a kind of Little Brother to the Lost. Curious contravention of our accepted notions, is n't it? Yet it is n't hard to understand when you look about and see how many people there are right around us who could n't draw living breath in anything like a spiritual atmosphere.

There are a few, however, who are different. If you love enough or hate enough it will keep you alive anywhere, — even in a world of shades.

I demanded some of his characteristic experiences. He told me lots of incidents, but he was curiously indifferent about them. After all, they were just what you might call the ghost-story of commerce, and rather a bore, you know. For instance, a man he had known came to him so vivid of aspect that he thought the creature still in the flesh, he was so actual. And, indeed, his death had only occurred a month before. But it was the flame of hate that gave him that glow. He was, as you might say, incandescent with the desire for revenge. He told Carruthers that his wife and the doctor conspired to poison him when he was ill, and that they were to be married. He wanted Carruthers to take it up — to frighten them; at least, to make their union impossible. But the traveling man refused to investigate. He said, sensibly enough, that it was n't up to him; that if he had a part to play toward these people, it was n't to execute their vengeance. He was willing to help them, but not to be played upon by them, nor taken possession of by their desires. So the man did not come to him any more.

He was shy of explaining what he

said to his People. He called it giving them good advice. After he had once talked to one in this way, he seldom saw that one again. If they accepted his advice, they would mostly pass on out of his vision into farther and, he hoped, more blessed fields.

That's the gist of the situation as I got it from Carruthers. He did n't know the answers to most of the questions I asked, and, as I said, he did n't find any of these experiences very absorbing — until the one I am telling you about.

Mind you, now, I'm not pretending to give you a good ghost-story. This is n't that, at all. Carruthers was a matter-of-fact soul, and I'm another. This is just a plain account of what he told me, and what I experienced myself.

It began down in California in the early spring. He went down from Vancouver to San Francisco on some business for the firm, and a man he knew asked him out to one of the big ranches over Sunday. It was an old-fashioned estate — they are mostly cut up now — big enough for a principality. On it grew everything a son of Adam the Gardener could desire. In particular, there was a whole square mile of blossoming cherry-trees, their shining masses of white interspersed here and there with dashes of pink almond-boughs.

I could live without California myself, and so, he said, could he. There's something about it too positive, too magnetic, fertile, golden. It overwhelms you and wearies you with its gigantic beauty. But the pink-and-white glory of a square mile of cherry-and almond-boughs blooming in the spring sunshine — well, it's worth seeing once in a lifetime, just to know that it can be true. It overwhelmed Carruthers, Scotchman from the North though he was. They're used to big

things in British Columbia, too, but there was something about the lavish beauty of that orchard that upset him. He wanted to walk there alone, and accordingly went out to do so.

What he thought, what he felt, was after this fashion: here, at last, was something that satisfied, — something as big and beautiful as we dream the mercy of the Merciful may be. In this bounteous, fertile spot, men had not beaten their brothers down, or fought like beasts for pitiful advantage. It was an untainted place where restless spirits would not come, a place where he might breathe deep and throw off the oppression which he sometimes felt his peculiar vision to be. In such an orchard one might be as free as the first man in Eden.

As he was thinking this, he turned his head suddenly and saw moving beside him, timidly, but with determination, a small, gray, insubstantial figure, woe-begone and desolate, yet full, in some curious way, of vital fire.

He described her to me over and over. Out of the things he said, a picture of her built itself up in my mind at last. I think of her as having been a girl with deep-set gray eyes, a small, square face, clean-cut chin, and a slight figure so charged with what we call temperament and personality, that even death spared something of its mutinous charm. You know the type. Carruthers said her very wraith had a glowing, passionate quality, like the leaping of the flame in the chimney-throat, but, even so, was unobtrusive. She was not alive as flesh is alive, heavily, almost rebelliously, but rather as fire is — *all* living, do you see? Her garments were gray, the color of a mist that the sun is about to pierce, wavering, luminous. Faint rose-color seemed to tremble on her cheeks, but it might have been reflected from the almond-blossoms. When she faced him with a

bird's quick movement her gaze was wide but steady, like the stare of a child at bay.

'What are you doing here?' he demanded abruptly, almost harshly. Her coming disturbed his joy in the Sunday peace of the orchard. He resented her presence, for he had felt himself free from all obsession.

She shook her head, but made no answer. He looked at her again, more closely.

'What are you doing here?' he repeated, more gently. 'You are not one of the stupid, helpless ones. You don't need me. You ought to be away — far away, in some better place than this.'

She evaded his question, then, by asking another.

'How is it,' she demanded, 'that you see me and speak to me? The people I have known all my life pass me by and look as though I were not there and had said nothing — and yet I have cried and cried to them.'

'I'm just made that way,' said Carruthers vaguely. 'Most other people are n't. That's all. Tell me, what are you doing here?'

Already she began to look less indistinct, less woe-begone. The flush deepened on her cheek; there seemed to come a light in her eyes. It was as if she glowed all over with joy at being understood. It brought her into closer touch with earth.

'I have tried so hard to make them hear!' she cried, 'so hard and so long! But now I have found you it will be easy. You will help me! You will put it right for me! You will go fetch Teresita and take care of her. Then I can go — everywhere!'

Of all the apparitions he had ever encountered, Carruthers affirmed, she was the only one who had pronounced personality and the gift of beguilement. He felt like telling her at once that he would help her in whatever way she

desired; then he remembered that this was not only unwise, but contrary to his fixed principles in such matters. He was vexed at himself for his instinct toward compliance, and so pressed his own side of the matter.

'Why,' he asked, 'have you not gone already?'

She looked at him in open wonder. 'You must know — if you know anything,' she said. 'I cannot go on while I hate. I must do my uttermost, my very uttermost, to set it right, and I must forgive.'

'Why have you not forgiven?'

The answer he received flashed into his consciousness as lightning flashes across the eyeball, as vivid, as intense as that.

'I cannot forgive Josefa — nor will I try — until Teresita is safe — with people who are good. Josefa took Teresita from me, and *that* is sin. There are things one must hate, and sins like that are of them. Sometimes to hate is almost sweet!'

Her eyes were on his face, but there was in them nothing evil, nothing malign. They were so limpid, childlike, and pure as she announced this transgression of the law of love, that Carruthers was puzzled and taken aback. So far as he knew, there is no exception to the rule that hate is Hell.

As he looked at her something recurred to him. Josefa — Teresita — where had he heard those names associated before? Suddenly he remembered. The remembrance was a horror. 'Are you Kitty Dundas?' he asked sharply. As he asked, he felt the stubbly hair rise slowly at the back of his neck; the scalp tightened upon his head, while his spine turned cold.

The Little Gray One nodded almost gayly, and with one small finger made an airy gesture toward a faint red line he now perceived about her neck.

'Good Lord!' Sandy Carruthers

said. He was a gritty Scotchman, but he shivered, and fell back to think it over.

The name won't convey anything to most Easterners, but it did to me, for I was on the Pacific Coast when the region rang, briefly, with the case of Kitty Dundas. It was one of those things you can't get away from. Even in that land of outrageous crimes, there have n't been many stories so pitiful and terrible.

The facts were these: Kitty Dundas was the young daughter of a Scotch rancher in California. She had fallen in love with one of her father's workmen, a Spaniard named Pedro Rivara. Forbidden to have anything to do with him, she ran away and married him. Her father cast her off with curses for contaminating his blood. The girl and her husband struggled along until the birth of her child. She was ailing a long time, and absorbed in the baby, Teresita. Pedro neglected them both and became entangled with a Mexican woman, Josefa Josatti. When he disappeared with her, he most unnecessarily stole the child and took it along. The young mother worked with her hands until she had saved enough to follow them to San Francisco, where she believed they had gone. She had not been there long before, one day, in the street, she came upon Josefa carrying the baby, which was thin and ill. Kitty leaped for the child, but the other woman fought her off, and in the struggle, the Scotch girl stabbed her rival with the latter's own knife and killed her.

She was tried for murder and acquitted on the ground of self-defense, — that was a foregone conclusion, — but that was not the end of it. In some fierce revulsion of her hereditary conscience, the child proceeded to hang herself, leaving a note which said, baldly, that Josefa's blood was on her

hands, and she found proper repentance impossible; so she refused to live.

She executed judgment on herself. Her father had come forward and stood by her during the trial, and she left the child to him. She said it would be better off without her. But that was a mistake. What really happened was that Rivara disappeared, old Dundas died of apoplexy on hearing of his daughter's suicide, leaving a will made after Kitty's marriage which consigned his property to charities, and the child was taken to an orphan asylum.

Think of living and dying in such a tangle of fierce passions and brutal deeds, such stark, gross tragedy as that! Carruthers said it took away his breath even to imagine it, and he watched the Little Gray One with fascinated eyes. She had come through so much, that scrap of a pale thing flitting just ahead of him. Save for that faint red line about her throat — where were her scars?

Twenty years old when she died, just a child herself, yet she had experienced everything. She knew lawless passion, mother-love, the agony of separation from her own, jealousy, hatred, the red rage that murders. Last of all, she knew the terrible self-revulsion of a being endowed with conscience and with character — revulsion against herself as all this heaped-up tragedy had made her. Evidently it had made her something alien to her inmost fibre. She had spirit; she would pay an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, even though that meant surrendering her life for the base life she had taken.

Kitty Dundas had known and suffered all these things in her childish flesh. Yet, here, her spirit moved serenely in the Sabbath sunshine, under white cherry-boughs, with lifted head. She looked angelic, almost holy. Sandy Carruthers said it was beyond him.

I suppose he ought to have known the explanation. It was very simple. Everything in her earthly life had fallen away from Kitty Dundas, save one.

Carruthers had lagged behind her in his shocked bewilderment. She turned and waited for him to join her. If her last statement had been to him like a flash of lightning, what followed was a whole electrical storm. Literally, he staggered at the invasion of his consciousness by great waves of passionate pleading, of insistence, of assertion. He must get the child, she said, and take care of it, bring it up in the way it should go — the Scotch way. Tere-sita was Scotch, not Spanish, in her nature, her mother insisted; little, and plastic, and Scotch! And Teresita must be taken from the orphanage and reared in a home, as a girl should be, by people who were good. Carruthers was good, and he understood her. Simply, he must take the child. Not until this was done could she forgive Josefa and float free of earth. The thing *must be*.

She spoke as if it were all the simplest matter in the world, and as clear and desirable to him as to her. She was as direct, he said, as the Gospels, and as disconcerting.

The idea she proposed startled and repelled the man. As it happened, he was a married man, and childless. Thus, the thing she desired was possible to do, perhaps even natural. But he had never told his wife of his visions, and did not wish to tell her. Also, he resented deeply any suggestions as to his conduct in the world of sense from this other world with which he had been born entangled. It was his pride that his normal, natural life had never been affected by his second-sight. Furthermore, he had no desire to take a Pedro Rivara's child into his house or his heart.

'I'll not do it, indeed,' said Carru-

thers doggedly, squaring his shoulders and setting his lips.

He stalked along stiffly. The glorious morning was spoiled for him, and those wonderful aisles of bloom. He was as resentful and vexed as we all are when the call of practical philanthropy catches us in that mood of vague uplift. The Little Gray One drooped beside him, woe-begone again and fading, as though she had taken a mortal hurt. He felt himself brutal, and could not bear to look at her. It was a peculiarly unpleasant thought that he was adding the last touch to the cruelties that had been heaped upon her, and she such a slip of a thing! But he felt no further impulse to do her bidding.

'I wish you would go away,' he said shortly. 'You worry me.'

It seemed as if she were going to obey. She hesitated, wavered. Her garments grew fainter, her face indistinct. He found himself drawing a deep inhalation of triumph and relief. And then, sharply, distinctly, like the clashing of drawn swords, he felt the crossing of her will with his. The sense of opposition was so strong and sudden that he fairly gasped as he realized that of the two her weapon was not the weaker.

Looking at her, he saw that her radiant aspect had returned, stronger than before. She was more glowing, more vital. Her mutinous charm was more apparent. He dropped his lids uneasily, fairly dazzled by the sight of her. She said with her whole being,—

'No! No! I cannot go. Don't you see? There is no one but you whom I can make understand — and I must stay until you do my will!'

This was her explanation and her ultimatum. When he lifted his eyes she had disappeared, indeed, for the hour, but she had left with him an oppression of spirit that he was not to

shake off. His heart felt as if some one had taken it and squeezed it in two hands. He was wretchedly unsure of himself. He could not dismiss the incident from his mind as he had learned, in the course of years, to dismiss other happenings of a super-normal nature.

To cut the story short, from that time forward Sandy Carruthers was hag-ridden, if you can apply such a term to such a visitation. The Little Gray Ghost haunted him, definitely, deliberately, persistently. She drifted beside him when he walked the streets; she took the vacant seat next him in the cars; she was visible against the plush cushions of his Pullman section; he saw her in restaurants, houses, theatres, even in church, where she seemed quite as much at home as himself. She followed him into offices and places of business. She came between him and his sales.

He ceased to see other apparitions. She had driven them away, perhaps. Instead, he was aware of a vast vacancy around him compared to which his previous world had been a cheerful, homelike place. He saw only her, and saw her constantly. Always he felt his spirit besieged; sometimes it was assaulted and shaken by the storms of pleading I have tried to describe. But Sandy Carruthers continued to go up and down the Canadian country and to and fro in it, selling goods for the firm at Vancouver, and smoking his old pipe between set lips. His grit was good.

He was an obstinate man and a hard-headed one, but grit is not everything. In time this pursuit got on his nerves. He had always taken his relations with the occult cheerfully and sensibly before this. He was 'born so,' that was all, and it was as much a matter of course as bread and butter, and as little to be dreaded. He found it impossible to take this in that way. He

had controlled all other wraiths within his vision. He could neither control nor influence her. He argued, begged, commanded, but she came and went as if she did not hear.

For the first time in his life he was afraid. Yield he would not, and yet, if he persisted, what might not happen to him in this strange contest of wills? Who knew what yet unused weapon she might not have that she could turn against him? That she seemed gentle was no argument. She had seemed so when living, until the hour came for her to use the knife. Living, she had feared nothing for herself or others: Was she to be less daring, dead?

Carruthers mulled over these things until he felt his nerve begin to break. He found himself dreaming strange dreams which made his bed hideous. In them he roamed a universe of undreamed-of and terrible colors; he listened to unimagined and awful sounds. He seemed to be viewing the wrong side of creation; to be hearing the discords of a groaning and laboring universe; to be seeing the frightful shadows cast by life.

Words failed him when he tried to tell me how these things moved him, but it was easy to understand. He asked me flatly if there was imminent danger to his mind in his condition. I was forced to admit that, even if I respected his account of himself and did not classify him with other victims of hallucination, he was, nevertheless, in a desperate way. I thought very badly, not so much of the fact of his obsession, since that was really a condition normal to his organization, as of the fact that he was bearing that obsession ill. I considered that he might see as many ghosts as he pleased, if only he were not afraid of those that he saw! Fear plays the mischief with us all. After this admission from me, he put himself in my hands.

We discussed these matters the second night I was with him at Calgary. The first night he was too sick a man to speak of anything. The next morning he was better, and we talked most of that day and evening over the fire in his bedroom. There was a blizzard on, I remember, and I did not go out all day long. The howling wind, the driving crystals of the snow, the whiteness and impenetrability of the world outside the windows seemed, somehow, to isolate me from everyday life and shut me into Carruthers's world alone with him. Thus, I listened more patiently and sympathetically than I could have done in my office, or anywhere else. I put aside my natural impulse to say, 'Nonsense!' I tried to understand and accept. I ended by talking to him as if he were sane and sincere, — quite a feat for a man of my training! — but I told him frankly he was in as bad a way as a man can be, and he grimly acquiesced.

Turning his case over in my mind that night, I reached a definite, if unusual, conclusion at last. Accepting the data he had given me simply, just as he did himself, there was an obvious method of getting rid of his present trouble, and I resolved to try the experiment of advocating it as a therapeutic measure. It was worth trying, though I smiled to myself as I reflected what some of my colleagues would say to me if they knew it. Fortunately, we don't have to publish all our experiments! Anybody but a stubborn Scotchman would have thought of this one for himself.

The next morning dawned sharply cold, clear, radiant, a day to put fresh life into the dying. It was thirty degrees below, the sun was bright, the world was white and glittering. When I came up from my breakfast, I found Carruthers sitting over a bright fire, comfortably drinking his coffee. He was quite him-

self in every way, said that he had slept well and was waiting to hear my advice.

I sat down across the fireplace.

'Well, Carruthers,' I said, 'I'm ready to prescribe for you, but I'm afraid you won't like the prescription.'

'I'm going to take it just the same,' he answered.

'To me,' I said, 'it looks this way. I might recommend a rest-cure, feeding, massage, electricity, and all that, for you, and try to work on your mind by healthful suggestion. That would be the right procedure with a person who saw apparitions because his nerves were out of order. But if I am to act as if I believed you — and somehow I am tempted to do it — I must prescribe as if your nerves are out of order because you have been seeing apparitions — which would appear to be a different matter and call for different treatment. This apparition makes one request of you, and states that her disappearance is contingent upon its being granted. It is a simple request. Why don't you just grant it and see what happens? Go find her child. See what it is like and take it to your wife.'

In spite of the agonies he had been through, the man stared at me with absolute incredulity.

'And do you mean to say you would *give in* to the creature?' he demanded, with a whole-souled scorn of me and my faint-heartedness.

This was putting it rather crudely, and I hesitated. I was about to tell him that it was merely a matter of therapeutics, and I wished him to make the experiment — but when I spoke it was to utter words that shaped themselves, without my volition, on my lips.

'Give in to the logic of the situation!' I found myself urging. 'Give in to the impulse of humanity! Why, Carruthers, you yourself have made me see

the pity of the thing! Here are we, in the bright, actual, comfortable world; yonder is that bit of a Thing you have described to me, roaming the outer darkness in unrest because her child is here, neglected and unhelped. And the blame for it is her very own, her fault, her grievous fault. She took herself away and left the child to others. Remember that — for *that* is her deadly sin!

'Take it home to yourself, man! If you were in the place of Kitty Dundas and by some miracle you found at last a human being you could appeal to, pray to, argue with, somebody in the same world with that child and able to help it, would n't you be fairly wild with joy at getting into touch with him? You or I would do just what you say that little Thing is doing. It seems to me it is inhuman not to help her out. You could n't treat a living woman so. And the little Ghost is more helpless and more pitiful than any mother of flesh and blood. You are her only hope. Don't turn her down!

'Don't you see how it is? She was thinking about herself, her own soul, when she deserted the child. She was proud-spirited, going to pay with her life for her crime. But her right to do it was gone. Her life was mortgaged to the child. This business of being a parent is something you don't forget nor get away from — not in Heaven or in Hell! It is the tie that holds forever. It is the thing that binds His duties on the shoulders of God Himself!'

Carruthers looked at me blankly. The thing had not presented itself to him in that aspect. He communed with his Caledonian conscience, and his face softened.

'Man, there may be something in what you say,' he admitted. 'I promise you I'll see about it.'

I was silent. To tell you the truth,

I was utterly staggered, both at what I had said and at its effect on myself. Those words seemed put into my mouth from without. I believed what I said while I was saying it. I was convinced as by another mind. As I realized this, I, too, felt the grip of fear. For the instant the wraith of Kitty Dundas was as real a thing to me as it was to him — and I felt myself merely her mouthpiece!

'I promise you,' I heard him repeating, but in an altered voice, *'that I will see about the child.'*

He was not looking at me or speaking to me. His eyes were fixed on the open door between our rooms. His seamed, red face was awed and pitiful, as if he looked upon and sorrowed for a passion of pleading that was beyond all speech. His sturdy features were twisted and his very mouth writhed with his pity.

I can't tell you how acutely this affected me. The air of that room was charged with something I had never felt before. My blood raced in my veins. I heard the drumming of my heart. A door opened before me, and I, too, looked beyond the actual. It was as though the wind that blows between the worlds had caught me and lifted me up — up —. It was the strangest sensation — the most wonderful.

My gaze followed his. Did I see an outline of palpitant gray like a mist that the sun is about to pierce, wavering, luminous? Did I catch a glimpse of a face with deep-set eyes, more agonized and pitiful than any human face I ever saw?

'I promise you!' Carruthers cried again hoarsely.

Did I hear a sound like a sob of joy? A wonderful cry that was half farewell to the burdens of this world of sense, half welcome to the new emprises of the world of spirit? I would have sworn it then, by all the gods! Now, after years and in cold blood, I do not know. But I know this — that I fell on my knees in that place, shaken to the very soul, for the room seemed full of light, of cries, and I had a sudden consciousness of prayer and praise ineffable.

Sometimes I hear in my dreams a cry like that of hers. Always when I dream that death has set me free at last, I wake with that sound ringing in my ears as if it came from my own lips and were the breath of utter joy.

Well, that is all — quite all — except that Carruthers recovered quickly, and his wife doted upon the child. With his recovery vanished his dubious gift of second-sight.

As I told you, it is my only ghost-story. And even of it, you see, I am not sure. A man like me never is, and most men are like me. *'Neither will they be persuaded though one come from the dead.'* For me, the Little Gray One walked in vain.

Thinking it over in my quiet hours, I say to myself that the Christ always knew whereof He spoke. There are no ghost-stories that are believed. There never will be, to the end of Time. I take it that there are not meant to be. For is it not the long anguish of walking by faith, and not by sight, that makes and keeps us men?

